

PROPOSED RESOLUTION



2005 WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE on AGING

Social Engagement: Preserve and enhance the older adult population's integral position in and connection to the community at large

Resolution _____ **Strategies for changing attitudes towards aging
Increasing opportunities for volunteerism and other forms
of civic engagement**

1. **WHEREAS** America now boasts the largest, best-educated, and most vigorous population of older adults in our nation's history who are now living longer after retirement;
2. **WHEREAS** an elder population explosion is now upon us as 77 million baby boomers born between 1946 and 1964 reach retirement age;
3. **WHEREAS** Baby Boomers and current older Americans express the desire to age positively, stay mentally and physically healthy, and be independent, vital resources to their communities, not dependant *consumers* of services after retirement;
4. **WHEREAS** typical Baby Boomers say they will fill their later years with a balance between full or part time work, travel, hobbies, and time with family, they also indicate a need to continue the commitment to effecting social change they began in the 1960's by giving back to their communities and volunteering to further causes that are truly meaningful and will change the world and make it a better place for future generations.;
5. **WHEREAS** many Americans of retirement age are interested in daily, long-term volunteering, Baby Boomers indicate that they are attracted by volunteer programs and activities that focus on time-limited, episodic and project-based service that they can seamlessly weave into the rest of their busy lives;
6. **WHEREAS** the country is in desperate need of help to address growing needs in education, health care, social services, public safety, the environment, and other fundamental areas of American life; and
7. **WHEREAS** adults of retirement age are often overlooked as a valuable resource for addressing social issues in their communities; and
8. **WHEREAS** 40 – 44 % of Americans 55 years of age and older are already actively involved in volunteer activities and 85% of people over age 55 report that they will volunteer if asked, but there are relatively few mechanisms that exist to assist them in fulfilling their potential in service activities that are meaningful;

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THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the 2005 White House Conference on Aging to support activities that:

1. Charge the Corporation for National and Community Service to take a leadership role in engaging Baby Boomers in service by recruiting and enrolling in its programs 1 million people of retirement age by the year 2010;
2. Reauthorize the National and Community Service Trust Act as a means of reaffirming, expanding, revamping, and recruiting more older adults and Baby Boomers into the three largest senior volunteer programs in the nation: the Foster Grandparent Program, the Senior Companion Program, and the RSVP Program;
3. Encourage and enable national, state and local organizations that currently provide volunteer and paid work opportunities for people of retirement age from all economic backgrounds to attract Baby Boomers by expanding and re-aligning their portfolios to include more informal, time-limited, episodic and project-based volunteer service opportunities as well as full-time, part-time, and episodic paid work opportunities;
4. Facilitate collaboration at the national, state and local levels of organizations involving older adult volunteers and paid workers, such as the Area Agencies on Aging, Volunteer Action Centers (VACs), National Council on Aging (NCOA) programs and AARP, especially in regard to intergenerational involvement and long term care;
5. Develop Federal, state, local, and private sector partnerships that provide additional resources to support elder volunteers as a resource;
6. Combat ageism by encouraging the Federal Government to provide education and public awareness that emphasizes elders as givers of services instead of consumers of services, that publicizes the positive contributions older adults make to their communities every day, and that focuses on the value of volunteering for people's well-being and esteem;
7. Encourage the training of volunteers by qualified public, private and non-profit entities to enhance the effectiveness of elder volunteers; and
8. Encourage research to identify and action to fill gaps between volunteer participation and productive potentials of people as they reach retirement age.

The following organizations have endorsed this proposed resolution. Other organizations that wish to add their endorsement should contact one of the following:

National Association of Foster Grandparent Program Directors
Brenda Lax, President (816) 784-4519

National Association of Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) Directors
Melodye Kleinman, President (310) 394-9871, ext. 450

National Association of Senior Companion Project Directors
Larry Imhoff, President (361) 880-3147